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HERBARIUM CASES.

BY DR. C. C. PARRY.

NOTWITHSTANDING the lucidly expressed opinion of the present official authority in Washington, dignified with the high sounding title of the Honorable Commissioner of Agriculture, or the "unimportance of the routine duties of the herbarium botanist," there has probably never been a time in the history of scientific botany, when greater attention has been given to this very important subject.

More especially is this true of a rapidly increasing class of local or amateur "herbarium botanists," who are intent on the collection and preservation for convenient reference and study, of limited floras, or particular natural orders of plants.

Having had occasion from a somewhat prolonged experience as a botanical collector, to realize the want in my own case as well as to observe the frequent loss of valuable material by others, from the lack of suitable herbarium appliances, I have been led to adopt a simple contrivance with a view to meet the *desideratum*.

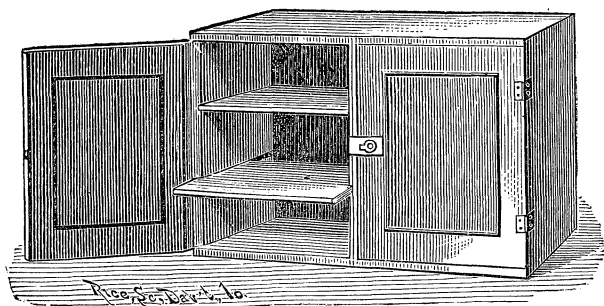
While for very extensive and permanently located herbaria, such as that of Prof. Gray at Harvard, stationary cases are perhaps more desirable on the score of economy; still there is a manifest advantage in having a somewhat portable character to such depositories, in order that necessary additions can be incorporated into the general collection with least disturbance of the original arrangement. More especially in the much larger class of collections subject to removal, is it advisable to provide for such contingencies, by separate portable cases.

Still another advantage of such an arrangement is in limiting the depredation of destructive insects within narrow limits, where they can be checked without the great expense of going over an entire collection. In this view, (somewhat on the plan adopted in the British museum), I have adopted cases of the following description.

These cases consist essentially of an evenly partitioned box, with double doors, black walnut (or hard wood) fronts, finished

flush on the outside, with no irregular projections of knobs or catches, so that for distant transportation they can be snugly enclosed in rough outside boxes (two or more together). The inside in each apartment has a capacity of $18\frac{1}{2}$ inches in height, by $13\frac{1}{2}$ inches in breadth, and $18\frac{1}{2}$ inches in depth. Each space is divided by two movable slides, into three equal divisions, or six to each case. The doors are bevelled on the inside, with a corresponding bevel on the case, to which they are attached by outside hinges, so that in opening at a right angle there are no sharp edges to hinder the drawing out of the herbarium papers ;

Fig. 83.



as well as allowing the cases to stand close side by side, without interfering with the free opening of the doors, which can swing clear back against the sides without bringing any strain upon the hinges. In packing for removal, remove the papers and slides, turn the cases on their backs, and lay in the papers in regular order compactly filling each space with additional padding if necessary. The removed wooden slides can, in case the ordinary sized herbarium sheets are used, be placed breadth-ways at the side of the papers, or separately packed in one of the vacant cases.

The measurements as above given are such as are adapted to the size usually recommended of herbarium sheets, and genus covers, or medium wrapping paper size, allowing a small margin for occasional large specimens, or ease of storage and drawing out. These dimensions can of course be modified to suit particular cases, without interfering with the general plan.

By a slight modification on the inside, drawers may be substituted for slides, to receive bulky or irregular specimens, such as

fruits, cones, wood sections, etc., still keeping up a desired uniform outside appearance.

In the permanent herbarium, these cases can be snugly piled one on the other, in tiers three or four in height, and closely fitting at the sides. The lower cases might be raised a foot or more above the floor, or the least used orders, or duplicates, kept in the lowest space.

The height of two cases (39 inches) would be convenient in looking over and comparing specimens, and where scarcity of case room is not urgent, the best lighted spaces might be arranged at this height.

At a rough estimate such cases may be calculated to hold conveniently six hundred species of average botanical specimens.

The cost of such cases, depending of course, largely on the material used, and amount of finish, etc., has been fixed by a manufacturing firm here in Davenport, Iowa (M. B. Cochran & Co., school furniture dealers), at \$6.50 per case. For a larger number (ten or more), or in case of an increased demand, the price could be materially reduced. I am indebted to the above firm for the use of the wood-cut, here given to illustrate this subject. The particular adaptation of such cases for school uses, to contain in convenient form the necessary material for illustrating botanical lessons, is too obvious to require more than simple mention at this time.

CHARLES ROBERT DARWIN.*

CHARLES ROBERT DARWIN was born at Shrewsbury on Feb. 12, 1809. He is the son of Dr. Robert Waring Darwin, F.R.S., and grandson of Dr. Erasmus Darwin, F.R.S., author of the "Botanic Garden," "Zoonomia," etc.; by the mother's side he is grandson of Josiah Wedgwood, F.R.S., the celebrated manufacturer of pottery. Mr. Darwin was educated at Shrewsbury School under Dr. Butler, afterwards Bishop of Lichfield, and in the winter of 1825 went to Edinburgh University for two years. He there attended to marine zoology, and read before the Plinian Society at

* From "Nature," June 4, with a Portrait.